

## Our Covenant God – Part Seventeen

### God wants a family

We must always bear in mind that the reason why God went to all the trouble of cutting covenants with people is simply because God wanted to produce a family and because of this, He deals within the context of families. If we have a friendship with God that makes Abraham our father and our fellow-believers are thus our brothers and sisters. And all who are children of Abraham on this Earth are children of God on the New Earth which is to come.

### God established His covenant with Isaac

We have studied how God cut His covenant with Abraham in great detail. In Genesis 17:21 God promised Abraham that He would establish His covenant with Isaac. We have looked at these Scriptures before:

**Genesis 17:19, 21** (NKJV) Then God said: “No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; **I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant**, and with his descendants after him. **But My covenant I will establish with Isaac**, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year.”

We see God establishing His covenant with Isaac in Genesis 26

**Genesis 26:2-5** (NKJV) Then the LORD appeared to him and said: “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.”

We see the Lord appearing to Isaac again in verse 24 of the same chapter:

**Genesis 26:24** (NKJV) And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, “I *am* the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I *am* with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham’s sake.”

As you examine what God told Isaac, you can see clearly that God was speaking ‘covenant language’ in that He was repeating many of the covenant promises He had made to Abraham. And thus, God established His covenant with Isaac.

### Cutting a covenant versus establishing a covenant

Unfortunately, in the English translations of the Bible the translators did not translate the verb ‘to cut’ correctly when it came to cutting covenants.

In part one of this study, we mentioned that when you read in the Bible that a covenant was ‘made’ between two or more people, the actual verb should not be translated as ‘made’. The Hebrew word is *karath* (Hebrew Strongs Number 3772). Even the root of the word translated as ‘covenant’, which is *Berith* (Hebrew Strongs Number 1285), means ‘to cut’. This is because there is always blood involved in cutting a covenant. You cut a covenant by the shedding of blood.

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In part two of this study, we saw that when two parties cut a covenant they mixed their own blood. In a case like this the two parties would cut themselves, usually on their hands, and then press their wounds together so that their blood would intermingle. You can never separate the blood after it has been mixed, thus you cannot break a covenant and still live. Sometimes blood substitutes would be used, but the principle stays the same. When a covenant is made between two people the verb is always cut because blood had to flow (Hebrew: karath).

The very first time that we see this word 'karath', meaning to cut a covenant is when God cut covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15:18. This is why we started our study by examining the Abrahamic covenant – because it is the very first covenant that God's Word says was cut between Himself and Mankind.

**Homework Question #1:** What does the fact that the Abrahamic covenant was the very first covenant that was cut between God and Mankind tell us about its importance?

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### A fact is established by two or three witnesses

The purpose of today's lesson is to look at how God then took it a step further and established the covenant that He had cut with Abraham. Establish means to make it firm, make it stand up, to strengthen it, and make it succeed.

God had promised Abraham that He would establish His covenant with Abraham's offspring:

**Genesis 17:7** (NKJV) And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.

To establish something as fact you need three people. One would be the primary person involved plus two witnesses, which would make three in total. This is why we have witnesses to marriages and to the signing of contracts today. Witnesses are also required in court cases. (We will look at the principle of witnesses further when we discuss the Ten Commandments later on in this study.)

Another example, for your own reference, of establishing something as fact is found in Genesis 41 where God gave Pharaoh a dream three times.

**Genesis 41:32** (NKJV) And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing *is* established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

We see this same principle of two or more witnesses used by both Jesus and Paul:

**Matthew 18:16** (NKJV) But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that *'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*

**Acts 1:8** (NKJV) But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

**2 Corinthians 13:1** (NKJV) This *will be* the third *time* I am coming to you. *"By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established*

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### God established His covenant with Jacob

**Genesis 28:13-15** (NKJV) And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: “I *am* the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I *am* with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.”

Thus, God cut covenant with Abraham and then established that same covenant with Isaac and Jacob. This is why He is called *The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*. His very name is testimony to the fact that the covenant was cut with Abraham and then established with Isaac and Jacob. Therefore, it cannot be changed or disputed in any way. It is established as fact forever and ever.

**Homework Question #2:** As you see how God fulfilled His promises to Abraham, establishing His covenant with Abraham’s descendants even after Abraham was no longer on this Earth, what does that tell you about God’s faithfulness to you personally?

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### What about Noah?

We saw earlier that the very first time God ever cut a covenant was with Abraham. However, it is not the first mention of covenant found in the Bible. The first time that the word *berith*, which means covenant, is found in the Bible is in Genesis 6:18, where God promises to establish His covenant with Noah and Creation.

**Genesis 6:18-19** (NKJV) But I will **establish** My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every *sort* into the ark, to keep *them* alive with you; they shall be male and female.

We see God fulfilling His promise to Noah after the Flood.

**Genesis 9:8-17** (NKJV) Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: “And as for Me, behold, I **establish** My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that *is* with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. Thus I **establish** My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

And God said: “This *is* the sign of the covenant which I make [this word is the Hebrew word for **give**, not cut] between Me and you, and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My

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covenant which *is* between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* on the earth.” And God said to Noah, “This *is* the sign of the covenant which I have **established** between Me and all flesh that *is* on the earth.”

Notice that this covenant was not ‘cut’. The verb used is ‘to establish’ and it is gift. This has puzzled Bible scholars because a covenant has to be cut before it is established and nowhere does God say that He ever cut covenant with Noah. Yes, it is true that Noah sacrificed one of every clean animal to God once they disembarked from the Ark but the text presents them as being an offering to God initiated by Noah, not the ingredients of a blood covenant ceremony. The animals were offered up on an altar. They were not split and walked between as in the case of Abraham.

### All of the covenants tie in together

I submit to you that the primary covenant was cut with Abraham (and Jesus) and then established with Isaac, Jacob and Noah. This is only my opinion (about Noah) and so I ask you to hear me out on this.

Picture a timeline. It is the timeline of all humanity. It starts with Adam on the one end and ends with the very last person who will ever be born into this world on the other end. Along this timeline certain people stand out. As you look at the timeline you see, in order of date of birth: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Jesus, yourself, and the last person who will be born on this Earth.

Now imagine that Abraham holds a big umbrella. This umbrella provides shade for the entire timeline. It covers the people who lived before Abraham and it covers the people who lived, live, and will live, after Abraham. That umbrella is the covenant that God cut with Abraham. As you look further down the timeline at Jesus you realize that He is also holding that same umbrella. The umbrella has two handles. Abraham holds one and Jesus holds the other. For, remember, it was Jesus who walked between the pieces of the animals in Abraham’s place in Genesis 15:17. This umbrella is strong and eternal. It can never be broken because it is really the covenant between Jesus and His Father. You and I are brought into friendship with God based on this covenant, just as someone like Enoch was. Although Enoch lived before Abraham and we live after Abraham, and while the covenant was never actually cut with any of us personally, when we believe in God and reach out to grab His hand that He offers us in friendship, we are actually grabbing onto that same covenant for we all live under its shade and protection.

There is another umbrella that was held by Moses. It is a small umbrella. That umbrella represents the Passover covenant and the Sinai covenant that God cut with Moses and the Israelites who followed him out of Egypt to the Promised Land. That umbrella is called *The Old Covenant*. However, that umbrella is broken and gives no shade at all for it was broken when the Israelites worshipped the Golden Calf. However, even when that covenant was broken, the Israelites were still sheltered under the umbrella of the Abrahamic covenant. We will look at those covenants in greater depth later on.

Selah.

**Homework Question #3:** God promised Abraham that by him (Abraham), all the families of this Earth would be blessed. How is that Promise fulfilled in your life and mine?

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**Homework Question #4:** When you see how the covenants all tie in together in God's great plan, why is it important for believers in Christ to study both the Old and the New Testaments, instead of focusing primarily on the New Testament as most do?

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